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## POLITICS OR PRINCIPLES FOR THE PHILIPPINES

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There is nothing peculiar in the fact that the American people take but the slightest interest in the Philippines and the national problems arising there. The situation is the same in England and in Holland, in France and in Russia. The people of the home land have little time to think of their own immediate problems—they have neither the interest nor the information to lead them to ponder over conditions half way round the world. That is why a democracy is so ill prepared to govern dependencies. And yet in one way or another republics and constitutional monarchies have become charged with the responsibility for hundreds of millions of Asiatics. And among these Imperial Republicans are the American people. In the Philippines there is today a situation which must be faced, with which it is every year becoming more difficult to grapple. Under the *laissez faire* policy which has prevailed in the past the evil day has only been put off. But unless a clear course of action is laid down, with the approval of Americans best qualified to judge, we are liable to do a great wrong to the Filipino peoples and leave a wretched blot upon our own national reputation.

The fundamental cause for our present uncertainty is a well known evil. It is something which every intelligent American could have foreseen, and which many cried out against. It is simply the injection of domestic politics into the already sufficiently complex problem of colonial administration. For reasons which need not be examined here, the acquisition of the Islands was promptly denounced as a Republican act. The administration there was attacked as a Republican administration. The whole question of our position in the Islands became a campaign issue, and if the American people have given any expression of opinion on

Philippine affairs it was, in 1900, in favor of the occupation of the Islands. As far as possible the administration of Governor Taft, and the succeeding governors-general was unpartisan. They endeavored to represent the American people. But fear of political reprisals, no doubt, caused the home government to hesitate, and no clearcut statement of American policy was made during the first fourteen years of our régime.

Under the present administration the results of partisan politics have been more evident. For myself I do not recognize that it has any mandate from the American people to impose radical changes in our Philippine government. Certainly all experience in tropical administration cried out against the clean-sweep in the Philippine Commission, the sending of inexperienced and untried Americans to conduct a government that called for wisdom and statesmanship. The disruption of the American civil service, as it existed at the close of the Forbes administration, based upon efficiency and to a high degree inspired with a sense of service, was a regrettable proceeding. This was caused not so much by actual dismissals as by the uncertainty of tenure occasioned by certain acts of the new régime.

In view of the indifference of the American people, and of the manifest evils of partisan politics, it is necessary to consider anew our position in the Philippine Islands. Why do we remain there?—for it serves no useful purpose to consider why we ever took up so great a responsibility. Do we hold the Islands for our advantage, or for theirs? Or is it possible to use our position so as to serve the peoples of both lands?

Formerly much was said, although with less insistence of late, about the value of the Islands to this country. They were believed to occupy a "strategic position." They would serve as a base for the exertion of our influence in the affairs of Eastern Asia. Their commercial value was at times acclaimed, and maps were drawn to show that Manila rather than Hong Kong or Shanghai was the great emporium of the Orient. There was, therefore, abundant reason for our permanent occupation of the Archipelago.

On the other hand it must be confessed that the best thought of the present age does not take kindly to the idea of permanent colonies. The political scientist may not agree that all men are ready for self-government, but he will generally accept the view that it will be possible for them to reach that state in time. And so a self-governing India, Malaysia, and Indo-China is no improbable dream. And a self-governing Philippines is certainly within reason. It has been said that the longer we remain in the Islands the more difficult it will be for us to withdraw. This I do not accept. If the people do eventually fit themselves for autonomy, surely no advantage which might possibly accrue to us would cause the American people to deny them that right. This seems to meet the argument based upon self-interest. But it might also be pointed out that there is some question as to the strategic value of the Islands. There are experts who consider our occupation of them a source of weakness rather than strength, and there are non-military students of Eastern affairs who believe that our position in Eastern Asia is really stronger when maintained by good-will, educational services and commercial intercourse, than when supported by men and ships in Manila Bay.

The commercial value of the Islands may easily be over-rated. There is no reason why Manila should be a transshipping port for China. The trade of the Islands has been largely increased in the past decade but it has been in terms of local exports and imports. Under American occupation some American merchants in the Islands and in the United States would benefit but not to such an extent as to justify the retention of the Islands on that ground alone. The strongest commercial argument lies in the fact that the Philippines may in time produce much of the tropical commodities now obtained from foreign lands.

If, therefore, self-interest does not dictate a policy of permanent occupation, why should we not retire from the Islands as soon as possible, or, let us say, immediately? That would certainly best serve our own ends. It would gratify many of those who hold that we never should have

occupied the Islands. It would relieve us from responsibilities which we are ill-prepared to meet. But over against this council of self-interest there are two insistent pleas which deserve a hearing. It would cast them off as foundlings, naked and weak. Measured in terms of education, experience, and economic development the people are not prepared to maintain a national existence. And there is the further argument which appeals to the idealism which has always been a saving grace in the American people. To abandon the Islands now would be to leave unfinished, almost as soon as it was well begun, the splendid constructive work which has already reflected credit upon our name.

It requires some temerity to pass upon the question as to whether the Filipinos are ready for self-government. The theorist holds that they are. The student of political science will at least demand proof that they are. It is easy to say that all men are able to govern themselves, but the facts seem to render such a statement subject to serious qualification. And in turn it is just as easy to say that no people of the tropics are able to govern themselves or ever will be. But one who believes in the evolution of societies as well as of individuals will hold that the Filipinos will eventually, and in a short time as social development goes, be able to maintain an autonomous state. If this is the case then we should be able to help them, and in helping them we will not only serve them but serve ourselves as well.

When will they be prepared to maintain a "stable government?" That is the question which must be squarely faced. On the honest solution of it, not in adamant terms but in sound principles, depends our constructive policy in the Islands. Three things seem indispensable; education, experience, and financial independence: when these are found then an autonomous government is possible. But "possible" must not be construed as "certain."

At the present time the Filipino people lack these three requisites. They are illiterate in the mass, they lack political experience, and their economic development is not high

enough to maintain a government able to provide for the interests of the state and its people.

At the present time the excellent schools established under our régime enroll only 26 per cent of the children of school-going age. Of this number the great bulk, of course, is found in the primary grades. In 1913 the average daily enrollment in the primary schools (a four year course) was 258,494 pupils, in the intermediate schools (a three year course) 25,295, and in the high schools (a four year course) 4281. The highest monthly enrollment was found in 1911. Since that year there has been a decreased enrollment, due not to any lack of interest among the people but to the lack of facilities caused by insufficient funds. At the present time instruction cannot be made compulsory, because money is wanting to furnish sufficient schools. Therefore one child in four is securing some education in the public schools, principally in the most elementary grades. Until a large percentage of the people are literate in English (or some other useful language) they cannot be said to meet the educational qualification for a democracy. I would set the standard high. In my opinion 80 per cent of the people, at least, should be able to read and write before representative institutions could be wisely enjoyed without the exploitation of the ignorant masses. This standard, high as it is, could be easily reached in time. It calls for enlarged appropriations for education and the introduction of compulsory attendance. The experience of Japan would prove very suggestive here.

With education must come experience. At the present time the Filipinos enjoy a participation in government unknown among the peoples of the tropics. This participation would be enlarged as the people qualify for it.

Finally, there must be financial independence. This means the raising of sufficient revenues to maintain an efficient state, a state able to defend the people from external dangers and also to provide the means for internal development, such as sanitation, schools, roads and police. Today the United States pays the entire cost of defence, by land and sea. To secure similar protection would take the en-

tire revenues of the Islands, and more. But to secure a fair measure of protection, for the Islands could never maintain an army or navy able to defend them from a first-rate power, would call for at least one-third of the revenues from year to year. And to maintain even a modest corps of diplomatic and consular representatives abroad would cut into the remaining funds.

Much of the talk of immediate independence seems to be based upon the belief that the United States will continue to defend the Islands with its army and navy and also look after all their interests in foreign lands. Such an arrangement should appeal to no practical American. To accept the responsibility for a government over which we have no control would be unwise in the highest degree. As has been well said "We must either govern or quit." Under no circumstances should the United States guarantee the integrity of the archipelago as an independent state. Nor should it unite in any international treaty of guaranty. The sad plight of Belgium should serve as a warning for all time. There was every reason why the great powers should have preserved the neutrality of that unhappy state. There is no political reason why they would turn a hand to protect the Filipinos. No "entangling alliance" could be fraught with more peril to us than a guaranty of the independence of a Malay state almost totally unprepared to maintain itself.

It is quite possible for the Islands in time to reach a position of industrial development sufficient to maintain a sound government without American protection. Education and economic advancement will go hand in hand. There is no reason why the Philippines, under good government, should not be one of the richest regions in the tropics. But until it reaches that point of financial independence all talk of "stable government" seems manifestly absurd.

If these fundamental conditions for Philippine autonomy are correctly stated, then it seems as if now were the time when a clean-cut statement of our policy toward the Islands should be made. It should be based upon a consensus of the opinions of men of all parties qualified to speak intelli-



gently. Perhaps a non-partisan national commission of experts might investigate the whole question and prepare a report. Such a statement would then have a national sanction rather than that of a party, and it could determine our policy for a term of years. There is every reason to believe that such a frank and honest statement of a constructive policy would meet with the approval of the best Filipino opinion. It would remove the uncertainty which exists so long as their welfare remains the sport of political upheavals in this country.

Such a constructive policy would call for certain immediate measures. The Philippine administration would be removed once and for all from political interference. A high standard for the Insular civil service would be established. Americans would be encouraged to make the service of the Philippine government a life work. Favorable conditions of employment and of retiring allowances would attract capable young men. An interchange with our own civil service would enable a man to return to this country if there were reason for it. The Filipinos would be given every opportunity to acquire political and administration experience. Offices would be opened to them as they showed themselves capable of holding them. Especially in the local and provincial administrations should they have the fullest possible participation and responsibility. As rapidly as possible all Americans holding inferior appointments would be replaced by Filipinos, for "the surest way to avoid friction is to avoid contact." Whether or not a change in the Insular Legislature could be wisely made is a question. There is a good reason to believe that the establishment of a Filipino Assembly, before a clear statement of our policy had been made, was of doubtful wisdom. The present plan of having a Filipino Senate may work either way—for good or for ill—depending largely upon the announced aim of government in the Islands and the support accorded the American executive by the Washington authorities. A better system during the period of American control might have been that employed by the British in their Indian and other eastern possessions. A single cham-



ber composed of American and Filipino officials, nominated members, and elected members, would have served admirably. British India, with 244,000,000 inhabitants, has a legislative council of sixty-seven members, and of these only twenty-five are elected. In such a council Filipinos would acquire legislative experience and would voice the desires of their constituents, while they would not be able to prevent legislation deemed necessary by the responsible administration.

The people should be protected, also, from exploitation during these years of self-development, whether the exploiters be their own kin or Americans or other aliens. No land should be sold to non-Filipinos in fee simple. The agricultural, mineral and timber development of the Islands could be carried on under long term leases on favorable conditions. Franchises and concessions should be granted on terms which will protect the people as far as is consistent with the investment of needed capital.

And, finally, as a pledge of our good faith, we might make a recurring appropriation from our national treasury, for a term of years, in aid of Philippine elementary education. This would mean more for the early establishment of "stable government" in the Islands than all the oratory that has been delivered on the subject.

A definite plan of this kind calls for coöperation between the Filipinos and their American administrators. It sets a definite standard of preparedness of self-government. It should result in the establishment of the first republic in the East Indies, of the first well-founded republic in the tropics. And it would serve as an inspiration to all the Malayan peoples.

When that day comes the Filipinos might become so convinced of the benefits which would accrue from relationship with one of the great powers of the world that they would desire to remain as a self-governing dominion under our suzerainty. Then many of the reasons which now oppose such a relationship would no longer have weight, for the Philippines would be prepared to maintain a stable government. The relationship might be similar to that

between Great Britain and the self-governing commonwealths, and the United States might be represented in Manila by a resident commissioner. Or, should they decide to go their own way, with our good wishes, they might still desire that a customs union be arranged, and their good will would be manifest in calling upon Americans for advice, or for capital, or other aid, and in this way American influence would persist after our flag was withdrawn.

And for ourselves, we would have the satisfaction of having accepted a grievous task and having carried it through to a most creditable consummation, of having raised a people from general ignorance and political serfdom to a national existence. And the satisfaction would be worth all the effort involved.